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MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

WHEN in the midst of a war, that blasts the present comforts, and has blighted the future prospects of so great a portion of mankind, we accidentally discover any successful cultivation of the arts of peace, any successful application of human industry and invention, any new conquest over the elements, (man's true field of glory,) it rejoices the sickening heart, with somewhat of the same exhilaration which Rousseau experienced, when far distant from home, and painfully labouring in the ascent of a volcanic mountain, he unexpectedly descried his favourite flower, pushing its way through the crevice in the *lava*. "Ah!" cried he, transported, "Voilà le Pervenche!" We have, by this means, an opportunity of stifling, for a time, the reflection so frequently recurring, what an immeasurable quantity of human labour has, for these nineteen years past, been thrown away in the most unprofitable and ruinous of all speculations; how far onward, but for this cruel war, the human-kind might (to use an American word,) have progressed in every useful art and science, in our own and in other countries; for, although such an illustration of the blessed arts of peace as we are going to mention, be given by the *enemy*, we still rejoice, because we firmly believe, notwithstanding the sleek and glozing language of diplomacy, it is the *instigation* of governments which keeps their people asunder, prompt as they would be, by the impulse of nature, as well as of self-interest, to conspire for the common purposes of humanity.

The improvement we must notice, is the draining of the Pontine marshes, a nuisance which for a series

of years has been incredible in its mischief, poisoning the air by noxious exhalations, spreading pestilence to the Capital, (Rome,) and withering into a destructive desert the whole tract of the Campagna, once the region of numerous towns, and a happy, healthy population. This great achievement has been thoroughly accomplished by a *skilful use of simple means*. Man is victor over the elements. They are the proper subjects of absolute power. What, in this battle, have been the results? A vast extent of good unworked land, gained to the state, (from 150 to 200,000 acres,) under the best influences of sky and soil, with an endless power of irrigation. Public health and rapid population, where had reigned disease, and languor, and pestilential malignity. Where infection had spread through the whole region, the lands are now selling at 18 or 20 years purchase, hitherto held so unprofitably, and, in all senses, in *mort main*.

Now, we cannot help comparing this great reform, and victory over the elements, and over the indolence, incapacity, and loathsome languor of former times, to that reform and renovation we are seeking to accomplish in our political state, the *domain* of the people. The *Pontine marsh* is at your doors. The borough-monger influence vitiates the vital air of the British Constitution, and spreads around either the contagion of corruption, or that listlessness and creeping apathy, which precedes a mortal disease. From the capital to the country, from the head to the members, the frame is affected, and the body politic degenerates into a state of incipient putrefaction. When we wish to drain

"this Pontine marsh" of political corruption, by a skilful use of simple means; to raise higher mounds against the inundations of prerogative on one side, and the mountain torrents of oligarchy on the other, we are told that all these plans are perfectly vain and impracticable, that the nuisance is *natural*, and must be borne as an evil irremediable; that it is probably meant as an exercise for our religious resignation. And how do we know, it is said, but this putrid marsh, stagnant through indolence, and malignant by ill-usage, may be "a fundamental principle of the British constitution."

Yet we will not the less insist, that "the Pontine marsh" of our public policy ought to be met by a radical reform; by cutting deeper down into the bottom of the nuisance; and, thus, from a sterile swamp, creating a solid and fertile soil for human enjoyment. By an amendment in "fines and levels," much can be accomplished. Catholic emancipation in itself would restore a "campagna" to the British constitution, and what by neglect, and treatment worse than neglect, has been abandoned, and left as desperate, would, when properly treated, and providently laboured, become a harvest of gold to the present race, and a rich granary to late posterity. But this is not the plan in agitation. Better to survey and reclaim our bogs, and to preserve in its pristine abandonment the "Pontine marsh" of our people.

When the constitution declines for a length of time from its pure principles, and degenerates in all senses from its integrity; becomes habitually partial, suspicious, and vindictive; loves to make a show abroad, at Corsica, for example, or in Sicily, while at home it estranges itself from its own offspring, this unhappy consequence follows, that the people themselves suffer by catching

resemblance; their manners and their morals, as a *Public*, degenerate into a morass of mind, in which the germs of genuine public spirit may be buried for years, without opportunity of developement, while monopoly and partial privilege are heaped up until they rot, and produce and propagate every malignant infection. The Constitution, in its abuse contaminates the people; the people, in their turn, confirm the corruption of the Constitution, and thus, by evil agency on the one hand, and passiveness on the other, infecting and infected, the degeneracy of both is accelerated, until, at last, what are called our best men, alas! alas! grow reconciled to the existing state of things. Not seldom do they felicitate each other on the portion of public liberty they enjoy, as if virtue itself was too *pure an air* for a constitution like the British to breathe in, and must be reduced down to a proper degree of adulteration, for the recovery of health; much in the same way as it was the fashion for physicians to prescribe *the fens of Essex* as a cure for a consumption!

Is that man a *CHRISTIAN*, who obeys the law, with the exception of one secret idol, which he worships with all his heart, and soul, and strength? Can he be denominated a *PATRIOT*, whose active principle it is to *hate the half of his country*? Is he a *TRUE BRITON*, who treats the Constitution as the man did the mulberry tree planted by the hand of Shakspear, purchasing it by way of profitable speculation, then hewing it down, and cutting it up for pipe-stoppers and tooth-picks, to those who are able to pay the price put upon them? Ah!—It is such events as the first resistance of the American colonies, or, as the present claims of the Catholics of Ireland upon the justice of their country, which become the touchstone to try the

the real sentiments of these loud declaimers on our glorious Constitution, who, in the first instance, were all Anti-Americans, and, in the second instance, are all Anti-Catholics, and, in truth, have no conception of public liberty as a common right, and invaluable only by being common, but solely as a sort of *patent-right* granted by the crown, and to be exercised for the exclusive emolument of that part of the people who are the patentees.

We gloried, in our younger days, to see America resist Britain, upon British principles, and we now, in our declining years, glory, with equal rejoicing, that the Catholics of Ireland, by their conduct and thorough sense of the true principles of the Constitution, appear more Britons than Britons themselves. It is thus, that in reality, amidst wars and loans abroad, and extravagant high church doctrine, put into red-hot practice at home, it is thus, by the Americans first, by the Catholics last, that British Constitution is upheld and defended, against the political monopolism of its peculiar blessings, against the jealous intolerance of the established church, and against the bigotry of the universities, the buttresses of that church in all periods of *Sacheverell* servility, and *Jacobite* loyalism.

These Universities, where books are chained down in long walks of library, and where minds are chained down by subscriptions, come forward, when the Church is deemed in danger, not with the petitions of subjects, but with the proclamation of Sovereigns, asserting "the church to be the mother of the state, and that the King, the Parliament, and the Nation have not a national, but a *conditional* right of interfering in all matters touching a Church," of which that King is the head, and which that Parliament has altered at

least five times since the Reformation. The Constitution, with them, consists in the Test and Corporation Acts, which are rendered vain, in practice and effect, by the exoneration of indemnity bills, but which they still prize as gratuitous insults to the English Protestant Dissenters; and these Universities, the lights of the land, now set themselves in array, (we had almost said in rebellion,) against the civil constituted authorities, if they should dare to place the Catholics of Ireland on the same footing with the sixteen peers, and forty-five commoners, in all probability belonging to the Kirk of Scotland. Such is the consistency of Episcopacy, in defending the Constitution, that is, the political power of their own church. And we again, therefore assert, that the battle of and for *the Constitution* is fought in Ireland; that, in reality, we have, as once was wished, exchanged Kings, that we fight for the true principles of 1688, and that the English petitioners, including Oxford and Cambridge, are still under the banners of James, and model their religion from the Popedom of an Innocent or a Boniface.

In the midst of much political and much religious intolerance, we must, on the whole, console ourselves with reflecting, throughout the whole history of the British constitution, whether by the interposition of Providence, or the interposition of the people, memorable events have, from time to time, occurred, which, either immediately or eventually, have contributed to the REFORM of that constitution—when abused, or to its regeneration when apparently in a state of dissolution. We hail such new eras in our constitutional history, whether they take their origin in the extremities, or in the centre of the Empire: whether the better half of the constitution be enjoyed

by colonists, or the whole of that constitution be extended to our Catholic countrymen. The British constitution may speedily be victorious in Ireland, as it was across the Atlantic; and, in our corner, we comfort ourselves with the thought, that notwithstanding the clouds of temporary circumstances, political, financial, military and ecclesiastical, which are continually passing along, and seem to shut out completely all prospect of reform, yet there is an under-current of public opinion beginning, though slowly, to set in, which, in its increase, will rapidly sweep off those clouds of the season, and give us a purer air, and a clearer sky.

Whatever may be said of the precious metals, Man himself, under all the unfavourable circumstances of the times, has not, we think, depreciated in value: but rather, on the whole, is in higher estimation, more self-respected, and therefore more respected by the powers of the state. Public opinion, that virtual representation of the people in Parliament, has, we are inclined to think, and, even from the calamities of the times, will continue to have more and more virtue in it. The subjects in constant debate, particularly the Catholic question, have a progressive tendency to inform, to enlarge, to liberalize the general mind. In the wrestle of the good and evil genius, we know which will at length prevail; and although Antæus, at every fall, seems to regain new strength from his mother earth, Hercules will at last take this offspring of bigotry and intolerance in his arms, and strangle the demon, between earth and heaven. A free press we consider to be this Hercules, THE GREAT EMANCIPATOR of nations, and which will at last triumph over the Antæus of servility, venality and corruption.

It is, we confess it, (to descend to our little selves,) an exhilarating hope of this nature which gives us spirits to persevere in this, our fleeting periodical production, degraded as it is by the ponderous quarto, and even the spruce duodecimo, to the lowest shelf of literature, and disreputable in its very name. Yet would we rather exalt a "Magazine," than distort and depreciate, even as the great Hume has done, the truth of "History," and the honour of patriot character. We neither seek for money, nor for fame. Our only object is to uphold those sentiments of political and religious liberty, which were long cultivated with ardour in this part of Ireland, which we still think congenial to the feelings of this town and neighbourhood, and which, we must, although unwillingly, yet in obedience to truth, declare, for a series of years past, have been stifled, in the diurnal publications of this place, publications that have always been the sullen adversaries of a reform in the representation of the people, and, but of late, have tardily, and ungraciously acquiesced in the hard necessity of Catholic emancipation.

In the petitions for peace,* beginning to spread throughout England, (see the Documents, for an eminent example in the town of Nottingham,) we hail the return of the common sense of the community, of natural feelings regaining their influence in

* It is a subject of regret that the petitioners for peace in the midland counties of England, have solely confined themselves to asking for peace, and refused to comply with the recommendation of Major Cartwright, to solicit reform. They profess to be actuated only by religious considerations, and object to blend them with politics, but are not politics, and especially that part which leads to reform, a most important branch of morals, and do not morals form the most essential part of religion?

place of motives undefined, and Quixotic speculations, all resolvable into *personal* passions, or the emolument of particular classes of men, at the expense, in all senses, of the common-weal. The factions in Parliament have no real feeling for the sufferings of the community, while these sufferings are kept to itself: but if it does not really *love* to suffer, and to suffer on, its *general* voice would be listened to, even by those factions, or at least give a tone of authority to those respected individuals, whose party is circumscribed to their own persons, but who do not forget when they get into the Parliament-House, that there is a people out of doors.

That people is now to be soothed and fascinated by the allurements of East-Indian speculation; and the manufacturing interests are to be comforted with the hope, that, in the course of some years, there will be a most profitable national, instead of a company trade to an Indian population, *provided* the habits, and manners, and wants of that immense population should, in the mean time, change, so as to make the woollens of York-hire, or the hardware of Sheffield and Birmingham, necessaries of life, in the regions of Hindostan. Like the thirsty herdsman in the Eastern tale, who desired the genius to let the river *Ganges* flow through his parched grounds, our cullible public despises the moderate petition of his more prudent companion, for that constant rivulet "which in summer never dries up, and in winter never overflows." PEACE is the good genius, who can supply us with this rivulet, in a revival of the customary connexion with the continent next us in situation, and assimilated to us in its different wants; but in all this ardour that runs from town to town at present against the abuse and in-

justice of *monopoly*, we are sorry that they all appear so sensible to the injury done to the rights of commerce, yet there is not the same indignation felt against a monopoly still more injurious to national interest, the monopoly of the prime rights of the British constitution. The corporation exclusions of Protestant ascendancy, in relation to the great mass of the people within this country, stand in the same relation as the East-Indian Company to the general interests of trade, and should be met with the same general reprobation. The constitution has no charter, except it be *Magna Charta*, and should be thrown open, in its fullest extent, to every subject of the Empire. But adversity is a powerful reformer; and the same exigencies of the times, which have impelled administration to lay open the India trade for the benefit of the distressed manufacturers, will oblige them, in a short time, to throw open the constitution to the Catholics of Ireland.

We should then felicitate our country upon a prospect of PEACE, with its concomitant blessings, if we could suppose that ministry would take advantage of circumstances so favourable to honourable negotiation. We do not mean by dispatching a Lord Walpole post-haste from Petersburg to Vienna, as if by the crack of his whip he could break the family compact between Austria and France: but by an open, and explicit proffer of negotiation on an honourable basis, at a period when active hostilities *must* be suspended, and when Bonaparte has suffered a reverse of fortune abroad, while his answers evidently betray a diminished confidence in the security of his internal government. It seems clear, from his reprobation of "ideal systems," and "search after first causes," and contempt of the sq-

verignty of the people,* and his appeal to history alone, (that register of the crimes and follies of mankind,) as the prescribed boundary of all modes of legislation, that this despot dreads a revival of republican sentiments, which he is able to keep down while present, but which in his absence is always ready to raise its standard. The Russian campaign has probably spread a distaste and sickening, with respect to this continual war, through all the first families of France, and we think the whole tenor and tone of Napoleon's communications, to be such as ought to induce (if any thing can induce,) such a ministry as ours to improve the present opportunity of accommodation, which never again, no never, is likely to return!

Expect not a proposition for peace from Bonaparte, during his humiliation. That is *our* season for a proposal, acceptable by its justice, and magnanimous in its moderation.†

* Bonaparte in his late answers to his dependant authorities, discovers as much techiness and dislike to the indisputable and unalienable rights of man, as even the apostate and pensioned Edmund Burke himself. Pitt called Bonaparte "the child and champion of Jacobinism." He may be justly termed "the child and champion of Despotism." For so all who are imbued with the pure principles of liberty, unalloyed with mistaken prejudices, must consider him.

† The basis of peace proposed by Napoleon, *before* the Russian campaign, was, "the integrity of Spain, France renouncing all idea of extending her dominion beyond the Pyrenees; the present dynasty to be declared independent, and Spain to be governed by a national constitution of her Cortes. Independence and integrity of Portugal under the House of Braganza, Naples remaining under its present monarch, and Sicily guaranteed to its present family. Spain, Portugal, and Sicily, to be evacuated by the English and French land and naval forces; and with respect to

The general basis of agreement that might prove *permanent*, would seem to be a joint understanding, and a fair compromise between "maritime rights," "continental system," and "the claims of the neutral to freedom of trade;" but if a complete revision and settlement of the law of nations in these important particulars be at present impracticable, (though why this law of independent communities should not admit of revision, on the occurrence of novel cases, as well as any other set of laws, it is not easy to say,) still it should be remembered that *peace itself* would give at least a temporary solution of almost all the questions in dispute, and that after the discussion has cost the present generation so much treasure and so much blood, it would be well to suspend both arguments and arms for a time, and leave the final decision to posterity.

Never let it be supposed that the retreat of Bonaparte is equivalent to total discomfiture; and, on that supposition, entertain hopes of a forth-coming conquest of France, or be deluded into desperate intrigues for the re-establishment of the Bourbons. It appears almost certain that his armies will be able, by continual reinforcement from France and the subservient states, to maintain their station in Prussian Poland, and perhaps to accomplish the capture of Riga during the winter, which would open the way to Petersburg in the commencement of the next campaign. And so far from gaining an ally in Austria, (however

other objects of discussion, each power to retain that of which the other could not deprive it by war." A proposal which we have always deemed both moderate and magnanimous, and which, under present circumstances, might no doubt be made the grounds of stable conciliation.

we might perhaps a mediator,) several circumstances seem to prove, that hostilities will be renewed between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Porte, whose leading ministry is in the interests of France, and who will seize the opportunity of regaining their conquered, and humbling their rebellious provinces.

Two important documents have appeared in the public prints, the one military, the other diplomatic, the first a circular-letter from Lord Wellington to the commanding-officers of battalions, on the state of the army in the Peninsula, and the latter a declaration from Lord Castlereagh, in answer to the Americans who have published the correspondence between the two nations.

With respect to Lord Wellington's address, (which disagreeably reminds us of Sir Ralph Abercrombie's judgment of the army in Ireland,) while we lament its necessity, some surprise must be excited by the evidence of such authority, that after so many campaigns, and so long an experience of active military service, so great a laxity of discipline could exist, particularly at those times, that must be supposed not seldom to occur in the contingencies of warfare, and which occurrences ought to be anticipated in the foresight of the ablest and the most fortunate general. Such a relaxation of discipline, "greater in degree than of any army with which he had ever served, or of which he had ever read," would seem to implicate, in no slight degree, the character of the commander, as being more or less the effect of *previous* imperfect organization, and want of the regular and habitual apportionment and distribution of superintending and subordinate military duties.

But, certainly, one great purpose held forth by administration for this war on the *continent*, namely, to train

our *insular* army, in the knowledge of war on the great scale, and the rigorous discharge of all the lesser duties which smooth the way to victory in the field, and lessens to little the hazard of retreat, this purpose appears hitherto, from unexceptionable authority, to be far from its accomplishment. The necessity must have been great, that, in the discharge of his great responsibility, has made Lord Wellington risk his popularity among the officers of his army, and led him, in his accusation of their "habitual inattention," to perform one of the severest duties which a general-in-chief can discharge. Whatever may be the dissatisfaction produced in the British army, by the aforesaid letter, by the harassing marches, the sickness affecting so great a number of the troops, and the other distressing circumstances naturally accompanying this retreat to the Portuguese frontiers, it certainly appears, that still greater misunderstanding exists between the Generalissimo of the native forces, and the civil authorities at Cadiz; Lord Wellington having gone to that city to obtain a definitive answer to several important questions on which the *future* co-operation of this country is to depend, and among other matters, to insist, that a competent portion of Spaniards shall perform duty under British officers, and be brigaded with British regiments.

Indeed, when we take into consideration the number of arduous and complicated duties, which, at this period, press upon this "great Lord," as he is called upon the continent, or, "great Captain," as we should rather choose to call him, all the circumstances of his retreat in the neighbourhood of three well disciplined armies, under the command of able and vigilant generals; his own army in the state which he himself has described; many of his

officers moving to and fro from the Peninsula to home, for health, or even for the purpose of a Parliamentary election! the inadequacy of his means; the precariousness of his pecuniary supplies; for seven months his army without pay; the number of his sick; the murmurs that begin to circulate; the inaction and obstinate impracticability of his allies; and the little confidence he can place in the Cabinet with which he corresponds, it would not indeed appear surprising, if he should throw up the command, notwithstanding all the *conciliating* retainers held out to him of high titles, great rewards, and abundance of ministerial compliment, did not difficulties themselves invigorate an heroic mind, while the hopelessness he must at this time feel of ultimate success, renders his perseverance doubly meritorious. The French force in Spain is stated to amount to 270,000 men, and so far from evacuating that country, 30,000 troops are destined to make them up to the compliment of 300,000. Lord Wellington's army most certainly underwent great hardships and privations during its retreat, and the excesses and outrages committed by the soldiery, the consequence in part of great arrears in pay, as well as of the inattention of officers, and want of sufficient authority, will account for the indisposition on the part of the Spanish people to hail us as their friends, or to consider us in the light of deliverers.

The declaration against America contains an historical detail of the doctrine and practice of "retaliation," and notwithstanding the subordinate topics which, in the skill of diplomacy, are placed as a screen before the actuating motive of hostility, we think it cannot wholly conceal a commercial jealousy at

first conceived against the success of neutral trade, rising at length into a fear of commercial rivalry, with the maritime means of supporting it, and protecting it by a *secondary navy*; in short, a serious apprehension of *mariners*, as well as manufactures seeking a *new market*, and of America becoming a trans-Atlantic Holland. The impressment of seamen, even from trading vessels, with the difficulties hitherto found insurmountable, of ascertaining immediately the country to which they belong, this is the real subject of dispute, intimately connected as it is with the very sinews of maritime power; and dreadful issue is joined, in the declaration on the one part, that "allegiance (in all its *feudal* latitude,) began with birth, and can only terminate with existence;" and that act of Congress which naturalizes and nationalizes all residents within the United States, from the first day of June, 1812, and gives certificates of citizenship as valid out of their own territory as within it. British seamen thus naturalized in one country, will be treated as traitors by the other; and in this new retaliation the war must become not merely a civil, but a savage war. It is already said, that six of the crew of the *Sarah Ann*, of Baltimore, had been sent on board the *Sappho*, in irons, to be tried for their lives as British subjects, (although five of them were by the American Captain declared native American citizens, the sixth only being an *Irishman* resident in America since the year 1793,) and in consequence, *twelve men*, including a midshipman, of the British prisoners on board the prison-ship, have been put into close confinement, as hostages to be hereafter dealt with as circumstances may render ne-

cessary.* Retaliation of this nature cannot long subsist, even in war. It has its natural and necessary limitations.

In looking back through the series of mutual provocations, we may observe that the Orders in Council have, in fact, been the means of forcing into premature discussion the whole system of international relations, and the consequence must have been, (even although war had not intervened, which places the whole subject on a new ground,) that the repeal of these Orders could only have stood foremost in the list of differences to be adjusted, a promising pledge indeed of final accommodation. It will be found very difficult to define a time when the repeal of these Orders was contemplated without any reference to the system of paper blockade, and the impressment of American seamen. In the words of Mr. Madison, the terms required were, "that the Orders in Council should be repealed, as they affected the United States, without a revival of the blockades violating acknowledged rules; that there should be an immediate discharge of American seamen from British ships, and a stop to impressments from American ships; a mutual exclusion of the seamen of each nation to be stipulated, and that the

armistice should be improved into a *definitive and comprehensive adjustment of depending controversies*." Mr. Brougham's prediction* of an amicable settlement with America, merely on the simple repeal of the Orders in Council, happened to be nearly, if not altogether cotemporary with the American declaration of war. The belligerent took place of the neutral; America by this means stands on a higher ground for negotiation; but although such an event had *not* occurred to baffle the prediction, we should have still thought Mr. Brougham was too sanguine, or sanguinary, particularly in his additional declaration, that if America were not satisfied with such repeal, he would join the ministry in the necessity of making war. We cannot help thinking that instead of taking a comprehensive view of the whole subject in dispute as a publicist, he considered it merely as an English partizan, and played off the fortune-teller on this occasion, encouraged no doubt by the political Brodism of the British nation, which is called the most thinking, but is really the most cullible people on the face of this globe. Of the various merits of this gentleman we have no doubt. He cannot be an inconsiderable man who is the political and personal friend of William Roscoe. We admire him as an author, and an advocate, although we could have wished that more of his *extempore* energies had been excited, on a late occasion, in defending the bar against the bench, and in repelling, with the promptitude of an Erskine, or a Curran, the most indelicate insinuation that he (the advocate,) had been *inoculated* with the principles of his client, which

* On the 9th of December the following preamble and resolution was submitted to the House of Representatives, (Philadelphia :) "Whereas, it is represented that Great Britain has seized sundry persons fighting under the American flag, laying claims to them alike incompatible with justice and the right of the United States, as an independent nation: Resolved, that the President be requested to lay before the House the information he has received on this subject, and the measures taken to redress an evil which violates the rights and interests, and outrages the feelings of a free and independent people."

* See the very sensible Letter in the Magazine of last month, subscribed "B.F."

were declared by the same authority to be false, seditious and libellous, making use of the term *inoculated*, we suppose, from a confused recollection, that this operation was first practiced upon criminals.

Mr Madison, it is expected, has been re-elected President of the United States. The opposition in favour of Clinton was composed of a curious coalition of those extremes in political principle, the weak federalists being strengthened by the most violent democrats, who considered Madison as not having sufficient energy for the war. And Clinton, though a democrat of the vehement kind, was espoused by the federalists, in opposition to Madison.

The Americans have begun the war with better fortune at sea than on land; but good fortune is in reality only a term in vulgar use for good conduct. While, in a great degree, they possessed the materials of a *marine*, from the general use of navigation, joined to a strong spirit of distant trading adventure, and the habits of strict obedience, necessary on board vessels of every description, the perfect organization of a *land* army, in all its complication, will require, after a long enjoyment of peace, a very considerable time, and often an experience of many mischances, as they are called, before the military character becomes engrafted on the freedom of the civil government. Europe, alas! is verging fast to the discipline of a camp; and America, in her own defence, will find it necessary to follow the example. She must cast a veil over the face of her free constitution; and while she calls forth, at the stamp of her foot, 100,000 militia, she must adopt that martial code, and practise that occasional severity, which will create an efficient army, and competent

commanders. Her *land* forces will probably be better calculated for the defence of her own territories, than the invasion of others, in which the best discipline is required in soldiers, and the best understanding among principal officers. Her small but active navy, with her numerous privateers, will make the sea continue to be her fortunate element, assisted as she has been by the dilatoriness of the British admiralty, and the difficulty which must, at all times, occur, of making any effectual, or permanent blockade of her chief cities and towns, most of them out of the reach of our navy, and the rest placed, like New-York, in a state of formidable defence.

Corruption makes its steady progress through all ranks of the community. Nothing is too high for its insatiate grasp, and nothing too low on which it will not seize. In the higher departments, sinecures, places, and pensions, supply the demands of inordinate ambition. There are smaller places to gratify the cravings of petty avarice in the lower walks of life. Thus the cause of peaceable reform becomes almost hopeless, when such a numerous host of *dependants* of every description and rank, are retained by government, to be paid out of the money of the PEOPLE to fight against the interests of the PEOPLE. The town of Lisburn had formerly been the residence of a number of French Hugonets, who left their country on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and settling there, had been instrumental in establishing the linen manufacture in this country. In those days, a French Church was built in that town, and a minister had a salary of £40 per annum paid by government. The old congregation dropt off, and their descendants attended the service of the Church of England. For many years no service was performed, and the church

has long since been appropriated to other purposes, and is now a court-house. The late possessor of the income, himself an immediate descendant of a Hugonot family, died lately, full of years, having sustained through life a character of the highest respectability and amiability. No one begrudged to him the emoluments of his former services. But a successor is now appointed, without any claims, but merely to gratify avarice, and increase the patronage of government. Thus when the public money is squandered, surely the public voice should be raised against such misapplications. Be ours the task to expose abuses, whether in the higher or lower departments; for this is the duty of a good citizen, and a vigilant centinel of the public welfare, notwithstanding the senseless defence set up by the little and great sharers of the public spoil, and which the people too thoughtlessly admit as a justification, that the share of each is only a trifle out of the public stock; whereas, the man who accepts either thousands, or only £ 40 per annum, without performing a service should be branded in public estimation as a partaker in the wrong on the people, and his name held up to merited reproach.

The aim in thus speaking out plainly, and calling things by their proper names, is to raise a sense of disapprobation, against all who in any shape partake of the public money, without rendering an equivalent service. If this merited reprobation became general, a sense of shame might be raised in the breasts even of the delinquents; and if the people loudly proclaimed, in strong terms, their sentiments, once more honesty again might come into fashion. But there is room to fear, that reform will be so long delayed, that peaceable means of accomplishing it will be ineffectual.

A systematic plan exists, to make honesty and a high sense of true honour unfashionable. Contrasted with the sycophants of power, who are well inclined to worship the dispensers of places and patronage, whoever they may happen to be,* let us view a Protestant clergyman, if he venture to express his sentiments in favour of Catholic emancipation. The whole train of self-named loyalists are loose on him. His clerical brother steadily looking for preferment, and afraid to give way to the smallest movement of the heart, lest he should be betrayed into an expression of honesty, which might mar the object of his daily and nightly prayers, exclaims, "He ought to keep quiet, such is not the road to preferment." The Squire reiterates the sentiment with a sarcastic attempt to put patriotism out

* The disposition to praise indiscriminately, and with sycophantic airs, is well caricatured, in a book lately published in London, called "Rejected Addresses; or, the New Theatrum Poetarum;" in which the principal poets of the day are made to pass in review, on the supposition of their being candidates for writing the address on the opening the new theatre in Drury Lane. The pensioned poet, W. T. Fitzgerald, so well known for his songs on public occasions, has his style and manner thus imitated.

"Hail, glorious edifice! stupendous work!
God bless the Regent, and the Duke of
York!
Bless every man possessed of aught to give;
Long may Long Tilney Wellesley Long
Pole live;
God bless the army, bless their coats of
scarlet,
God bless the navy, bless the Princess
Charlotte;
God bless the guards, though worsted Gal-
lia scoff,
God bless their pigtails, though they're now
cut off;
And, oh! in Downing-street should Old
Nick revel
England's prime minister, then bless the
Devil!"

of countenance, and reduce all virtuous sentiment to a level with selfish apathy. Such are the manners of the times, so highly unfavourable to the slightest display of energy of character. Shall the friends of virtue in such a crisis be silent? No! they are called upon in these circumstances for greater decision, and more strongly marked energy. Shall folly or vice throw her bolts, and "virtue have no tongue" to proclaim the shame? The fact is, that our landed and commercial aristocracy, and a numerous class, latterly very common, half-merchant, or half-tradesman, and half-squire, joined by most of the clergy of the establishment and of the demi-establishment, partaking of the sweets of the *Regium Donum*, have formed a confederacy, not however publicly avowed, to stifle the voice of patriotism, and keep down public spirit. The people are called up to think for themselves, and refuse any longer to be swayed by the enervating example of the higher classes, many of whom are apostates from the cause of liberty, which, when it was the fashion of the day, they appeared to support.

The efforts to prevent complete emancipation to the Catholics, on the broad principle of universal religious liberty, unaccompanied with degrading, and insidious conditions, craftily designed to defeat the measure, are unremittingly pursued, but in various degrees, according to the strength of the faction in different places. In the counties of Antrim and Down, no public meetings have been held, but petitions are circulated through the several districts, and signatures are privately obtained. The Anti-Catholic party fear to try their strength openly at County meetings, lest from the remaining spirit of the country, they should experience a defeat. In Fermanagh,

were carried at the meeting, and the Sheriff signed them officially; but in a few days afterwards, he attended a meeting of the Catholics, and expressed his personal disapprobation of the proceedings of the Protestant meeting. In Limerick, the Catholics conceiving the Sheriff had not power in convening his bailiwick, to exclude them, attended, and joined by a large number of Protestants, carried the question of adjournment, sine die. The defeated party retired, and passed their resolutions, but the Sheriff, with great propriety, declined to preside at their separate meeting. In Meath, a full meeting of Protestants was held, when much discussion took place, and some men of high respectability expressed strong disapprobation of the proceedings. Much interruption was given to some of the speakers by a party of clerical intolerants, headed by John Pollock, a man well known in this country. John Pratt Winter, in a speech replete with much sound sense, defended the Catholics from the aspersions attempted to be thrown on them, and proved, that the present opposition, though affecting moderation, was intended by the principal actors in the scene, to defeat the question of concession altogether, under the hypocritical mask of asking for securities. He likewise censured some proceedings of the Catholics, which, with the view of procuring their people to vote only for such members of Parliament, as would pledge themselves to support their claims, might in some degree trench on the personal right of every man to judge for himself in giving his vote. We may confess, that some of us had similar fears at the time, and were far from wishing to see the dominion of a party substituted for the corrupt influence of a landlord in elections. Elections, to be really pure, should, both in theory and practice, be freed

from all extrinsic influence. Ballot would probably most effectually prevent some of the present evils, and should be an essential constituent in any plan of Parliamentary reform.

To this cause, we are ardently, and perhaps enthusiastically attached, for we are not ashamed of being branded as honest enthusiasts in a good cause. The postponement of Catholic emancipation, is not in some respects an object of regret. Sooner or later this question of justice and sound policy must be carried, but if the boon came from men at present in power, it might operate as a bribe on the judgment of some of the Catholic body, and cause them, by being blinded to the defects of the system, to become the unqualified supporters of things as they are in other respects, and opposers of reform. Now they may fairly see who are their friends. The present crisis affords a good rule for judging. Catholics may see their best interests are inseparably connected with the reformers. The high Anti-Jacobin party, whatever disguises they may assume, or however plausible may be their show of friendship; are strongly and radically opposed to them and their claims. Parliamentary reform must be the forerunner, as it can only be the effective cause of Catholic emancipation.

In the present times we are overrun with a species of misnamed loyalty, which in a blind adherence to the constitution, overlooks its defects, and discovers attachment to it only by an anxious desire to participate in the emoluments arising from its abuses and corruption. This loyalty has its immediate reward, and if the advocates of it flatter themselves they are serving their country, they surely do not serve it for nought. They have no claim to the virtue of disinterestedness. There also is a lax system of morality by

no means unfrequent. Its professors are zealous in an attachment to externals. They are clamorous in favour of the reputed orthodoxy of the sect to which they happen to belong, and against others, who do not follow with them, they give way to an intolerant and fierce bigotry. To fall behind their belief, or to exceed it, is in their view equally a crime. But their disapprobation of vice is nicely balanced by a consideration of the rank or supposed consequence of the offender. There is something in rank and title, which dazzles these pseudo religionists; and hence there is much room to call in question their sincerity. Like the society for the suppression of vice in London, they are rigorous against venal transgressions of the poor, whom they unrelentingly fine, for purchasing victuals, or travelling with loaded carts on a Sunday, while the equipages of the rich are objects which they permit to pass heedlessly along, unmolested, although in the view of reason the acts of the one are less a violation of the supposed sanctity of the day than the other. So these men of accommodating morals pass over, with much allowance, and even with seeming approbation, the vices of men in the first offices of government, and loudly proclaim the value of the constitution, as so impurely and corruptly administered, and reserve all their dislike for those, who honestly expose abuses, wherever they appear. Thus may men be known, and it is a safe rule to distrust all those, who, however zealous they may be in reprobating vice in the abstract, are yet very tender in exposing the errors of those, who, from their superior station, are peculiarly objects to be held up to blame, if by their conduct they deserve it. We could have gained more popularity if we had consented to go with the cur-

rent : but honour forbade, and we rejoice in the choice we have made.

Consistent with this plan of expressing our thoughts, whether in matters relating to our domestic situation, or our policy as to foreign relations, we tell our opinions candidly, how much soever they may differ from the fashionable sentiments of the day ; and thus, contrary to common opinions, observations are hazarded, not in unison with the views of the multitude. To some, notwithstanding present exultation, there appears little consolation in the situation of affairs, either in the Peninsula, or the North of Europe. Bonaparte wielding the powers of a mighty empire, may yet retrieve the mishaps of the last campaign. His war of unprincipled aggression may yet be successful, and his mad career of ambition may not be so near a close, as the sanguine fondly anticipate. But justly condemned, as he stands, in the view of the haters of despotism, and the lovers of freedom, his enemies are not much better. The autocrat of all the Russias, is not more merciful, and certainly not so much enlightened. The redoubtable ally of Russian superstition, Saint Sergius, the tutelary saint of Moscow, may not be able to repel the mighty hordes of French marauders. Common sense revolts at such debasing superstition, and sickens under the idea of the degradation of the human intellect, and it requires a steady head, and a sound judgment, not to fly from the one extreme, to hope for some amelioration of intellect, even from the coming into contact with a French invader. Yet as it is not right to do or wish evil, that good may come from it, let the thought be dismissed, and let us rather hope that time, and increasing light, may yet better the con-

dition of the barbarous, uncivilized Russian Boor, and his scarcely more enlightened masters. The wild scheme of revolutionizing Prussia, under British and Russian interference, arising from the capitulation of the Prussian General D'York, may be hoped to be only the dream of London editors, and not the scheme of British statesmen, although noted both for the rashness and weakness of their councils. Let this speculation terminate as it may, in the mean time, the French, excepting on the margin of the Baltic, between the Prugel and the Vistula, have retreated westerly, leaving open to the incursions of the Russians a large portion of the territories of Prussia, and the defection of 20,000 men, under the Prussian generals, has opened the way from Wilna and from Tilsit, abandoned by the French, even to Koningsberg, where General Hope is sent on a mission from this country, to concert farther measures with the Prussian (what shall we call them) Seceders. Bonaparte still boasts of having 200,000 men in his army in the North, and has called forth 350,000 more in France, if they come when he does call for them. Alexander, on his part, orders a levy of 300,000 ; and both Emperors prepare to renew more dreadful conflict in the spring.

Thus flows, thus ebbs, the tide of men and things. Both Monarchs are *now* applying to the ultimate power—the people. Napoleon allows the municipal corps of Paris to assemble and even to *speak*, when the business is to offer him 500 cavalry, their part of 40,000 to be raised throughout all France ; and Alexander is holding forth freedom and happiness, independence and security, to the Poles and Lithuanians. Ah ! what good well-wishers to the

common-weal, do these Despots become, when their affairs go untowardly!

In the Peninsula, Lord Wellington has proposed, in the way of *demand*, to the Cortes and the Regency, that the government of the kingdom of Spain should be *so far* placed in his hands, as to have the nomination of all the great officers, both civil and military, accountable to himself alone; four Captain-Generals to manage the military arrangements, and a Governor in each province for the civil concerns of the nation. This certainly is a measure for the *unity and integrity* of the government, corresponding in its nature to what has taken place in Sicily, but of its effects on the feelings and habits of the Spanish people, and their constituted authorities, as a new revolution, which may seem to make Lord Wellington a Bernadotte in Spain, time will determine. It appears as if it had been the plan of Mr. Canning, adopted in the cabinet by Lord Castlereagh, and we think it a hazardous one.

We will still indulge an auspicious hope, that negociation, on some moderate basis, will take place before the renewal of the campaign. It is a precious interval, if its value be justly prized, and happily improved. It is a *pause*, as if ordered by Providence, a *truce of God*, for recollecting ourselves, for reining in the furious passions, and listening to the pressing groans of humanity. We still reiterate the call of peace abroad, with union and reform at home; and notwithstanding all the war-whoops of a large part of our civil and ecclesiastical community, we think that PUBLIC OPINION is slowly and efficaciously setting in for a change of public measures. The Constitution (gallant vessel!) lies on her broad side, and sunk in the sand. The water begins to collect around

her: one rippling wave succeeds to another, and is heard, at length, to beat against her sides. Still she lies a prostrate and seemingly immovable mass. The tide increases; still, still she lies a log as before: another wave succeeds! another! another!—she RISES!!—in one and the same instant she *rights herself!* and floats along majestically in her proper element, the protectress of Liberty, and the glory of the world!

“ Her flag aloft spreads ruffling to the
wind,
And sanguine streamers seem the flood
to fire.”

DRYDEN.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,

AS I observe, that in the pages of your truly patriotic publication, you strongly reprobate all intolerance and oppression, I beg leave to submit to you, and to the public, a case of a peculiar and extraordinary kind; a case indeed of unprecedented injustice, supported by the most unexampled malignity. I allude to the case of Mr. Adams, with regard to his congregation of Clare. The persecution which that gentleman has suffered on account of his having declared himself favourable to Catholic emancipation, is described in former numbers of your publication; and cannot fail to excite a just indignation in the breasts of all liberal and well-principled men. I am informed, that this persecution is still kept up, and even with an increasing zeal. The porches of the meeting-house are blocked up; and a mob is always on the alert, to obstruct Mr. Adams in any attempts which he may think proper to make, for recovering the use of the meeting-house. Even threats have been